

December 3, 2015

Dear Mayor and Members of Hamilton City Council:

We wish to provide you with an update on the status of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce's LRT Task Force and to comment on the motion before you to impose a *Moratorium on Any New Projects, Roadway Alterations or Designs That Reduce Motor Vehicular Capacity on any Roadway within the LRT Corridor*.

### **LRT Task Force Update**

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce's LRT Task Force is being reactivated to feed into the Council's LRT Sub-Committee as contemplated in the Terms of Reference adopted by the Sub-Committee at its November 30, 2015 meeting.

The first meeting is scheduled for December 10 and will provide the opportunity for Andrew Hope and Paul Johnson to introduce themselves, to provide a project update and to help the Task Force members understand how they can assist the City of Hamilton/Metrolinx LRT Project Team throughout the course of the project.

Now that the LRT project is in a new phase, much of next week's discussion will pertain to the new Terms of Reference for the Task Force. I will be happy to provide a completed version of the new Terms of Reference at the next meeting of the LRT Sub-Committee in January, but they are likely to include some of the following themes:

- 1) The Task Force will continue to deliver general awareness to the business community on the economic benefits behind LRT and will provide regular updates on the status of the project;
- 2) The Task Force will help provide the LRT Project Team with key stakeholder engagement opportunities, and the community advocacy and leadership necessary to see the project through to the finish;
- 3) The Task Force will work with the LRT Project Team to devise strategies and communications initiatives intended to mitigate the impact of construction on the downtown business community and the business community along the LRT corridor;
- 4) The task force will advocate for strategies and policies that maximize the economic uplift associated with this once-in-a-lifetime infrastructural investment.

### **Comment on Moratorium Motion**

It is the last point above about maximizing the economic uplift associated with the project that necessitates a comment on the motion before you to impose a *Moratorium on Any New Projects, Roadway Alterations or Designs That Reduce Motor Vehicular Capacity on any Roadway within the LRT Corridor*.

First, we applaud the fact that the motion does not apply to two-way conversion and bicycle lane projects that Council has already directed staff to implement. These projects should proceed regardless of the LRT project because they are the right quality of life enhancements for those neighbourhoods. They will thus have a positive effect on economic development, while likely having a negligible effect on goods movement due to excess lane capacity available in the identified conversion zones.

Second, we agree with the spirit behind the motion in ensuring that the LRT Project Team uses the best evidence and modeling possible to determine what the impacts of LRT will be on traffic and goods movement, which are two very important considerations.

However, we are concerned that the motion does not go far enough in directing the LRT Project Team to use evidence-based best practices to balance the needs of *all users* in the design of the Hamilton LRT system, both through its corridor and throughout all impacted corridors (in other words, the entire city).

As an organization, we've been working hard with other anchor institutions over the last few years to highlight the business case that links complete streets implementations with commercial district and neighborhood renewal in Hamilton.

Through our member task force and partnership with McMaster Institution for Transportation and Logistics, we also understand and have reviewed evidence that adoption of public transit and creation of Transit Oriented Demand is interlinked with user experience in the first and last mile of one's destination. It is a message that Doug Morgan of Calgary Transit recently brought to the City of Hamilton Citizen's Jury on Public Transit as he talked about the design principles that led to the success of his city's LRT system.

The City's own Rapid Ready Report provides a roadmap for successful implementation of the Hamilton LRT project to the benefit of all users: residents, pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, drivers, goods movers, and bricks and mortar businesses. It outlines the Seven Key Actions needed to "greatly improve the pay-back for major infrastructure investments."

And while we have seen comprehensive plans to address the first four key actions, as they relate to increasing HSR ridership, Rapid Ready makes clear that the Hamilton LRT project is a complete streets project.

We fear that the motion before you would tie the hands of city staff and the LRT Project Team over the next 18-24 months by preventing them from designing into the project, and through all its impacted corridors, the very best practices that are essential to the success of LRT.

I am not alone in the belief that quality of life is one of Hamilton's strongest economic development assets. Members of the community and businesses serving them increasingly understand the need for a rebalancing of our public spaces and streets.

Over the next few decades we will be competing with communities across Ontario and the world to demonstrate to investors and migrants that Hamilton is an evolving and progressive city. Our success will be determined by whether we get this LRT project right. This motion seems to limit our ability to do so.

Respectfully yours,



Keanin Loomis  
President & CEO, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce